

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 MCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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O 171735Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8107

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BELGRADE 6142

FOR HARTMAN FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR YO PINS EAR
SUBJ: MEETING WITH BERNARDIC

1. I WAS ASKED TO MEET WITH FSFA ASSISTANT SECRETARY BERNARDIC TODAY AT NOON. I ASKED FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING AND WAS INFORMED THAT HE WISHED TO DISCUSS MY CALL ON STARCEVIC LAST WEEK ON "CARLOS". WHEN WE MET, BERNARDIC FIRST APOLOGIZED FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO RECEIVE ME LAST WEEK (BECAUSE HE WAS IN SLOVENIA IN CONNECTION WITH THE CEAUSESCU VISIT) AND ALSO FOR THE SHORT NOTICE GIVEN FOR THIS MEETING.

2. HE SAID HE WISHED TO DISCUSS THE "CARLOS" MATTER WHICH I HAD RAISED WITH STARCEVIC ON SEP 9. AT THIS POINT HE STARTED READING FROM A PREARRANGED TEXT. HE REVIEWED SOME OF WHAT I TOLD STARCEVIC ON CARLOS, MENTIONING THAT HE UNDERSTOOD "THAT THE USG IS INTERESTED IN HAVING THE GROUP OF TERRORISTS ARRESTED AND EXTRADICTED TO COUNTRIES WHERE THEY COMMITTED CRIMES". AT THIS POINT I INTERJECTED THAT I TOLD STARCEVIC ALSO "OR PROSECUTED IN YUGOSLAVIA WHICH THE HAGUE CONVENTION PERMITS." I ALSO SAID I EXPRESSED MORE THAN USG "INTEREST". I SAID I HAD URGED
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AT THAT TIME THAT THE YUGOSLAVS PERFORM THEIR OBLIGATIONS UNDER

THE HAGUE CONVENTION AND COMPLAINED THAT CARLOS AND HIS ACCOMPLICES HAD NOT BEEN ARRESTED WHEN THEY ENTERED. BERNARDIC ACKNOWLEDGED THIS.

3. BERNARDIC, READING FURTHER, SAID HE HAS BEEN AUTHORIZED TO SUPPLY AN ANSWER TO ME, AND ALSO INFORM ME THAT THE GOY HAS SUPPLIED ANSWERS TO ALL GOVERNMENTS HAVING EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THE "CARLOS" AFFAIR.

4. BERNARDIC READ: "ON SEPTEMBER 6, 1976, AT 2053 HOURS ON BOARD ALGERIAN FLIGHT AH 32-34, WHICH RAONG WITH ITS FLIGHT HERE TOUCHED DOWN ALSO IN GENEVA, LANDED IN BELGRADE WITH A GROUP OF PASSENGERS AMONG WHICH WAS ONE PERSON WHO PARTLY CORRESPONDS TO THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PERSON WHICH WE RECEIVED FROM SOME WEST EUROPEAN AUTHORITIES. I MUST SAY THAT WE HAVE TAKEN THIS INFORMATION VERY SERIOUSLY AND HAVE TAKEN VERY SERIOUS AND EXTENSIVE MEASURES IN ACCORDANCE WITH OUR STRUGGLES AGAINST TERRORISM. IMMEDIATELY ON ARRIVAL OF THE GROUP, THE WHOLE GROUP AND THE PERSON FITTING THE DESCRIPTION OF CARLOS WERE PLACED UNDER CONTROL OF THE AUTHORITIES." I INTERJECTED HERE ASKING WHETHER HE MEANT "SURVEILLANCE" RATHER THAN "CUSTODY". HE AGREED SURVEILLANCE WAS A BETTER WORD (ALTHOUGH HE WAS RELUCTANT TO DROP CONTROL); AND CONTINUED, "OF COURSE AFTER EXTENSIVE MEASURES WHICH WERE TAKEN, OUR APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES DID NOT ESTABLISH THAT ANY OF THE PERSONS WERE EITHER CARLOS RAMIREZ OR KLEIN. THESE ARE THE FINDINGS OF OUR RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES AND THIS WE HAVE COMMUNICATED TO THE OTHER GOVERNMENTS INTERESTED AND TO YOU." THIS ENDED HIS READING OF THE STATEMENT.

5. WHEN I ASKED WHETHER THESE PEOPLE WERE QUESTIONED, BERNARDIC SAID HE HAD NOTHING TOADD. THHEN I ASKED IF YUGOSLAV AUTHORITIES ESTABLISHED WHO THEY WERE, AND HE SAID, "YES, JOURNALISTS AND TECHNICANS OF ALGERIAN TV." I ASKED IF THEY WERE ALGERIAN CITIZENS CARRYING ALGERIAN PASSPORTS AND HE STATED THAT SINCE THEY WERE ALGERIAN TV REPRESENTATIVES, HE "JUST SURMISED THAT THEY HAVE ALGERIAN PASSPORTS." HE ADDED, "WE THOUGHT THIS ANSWER WOULD BE CONFIDENTIAL

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ENOUGH. THE SECURITY AUTHORITIES ARE IN POSSESSION OF MORE INFORMATION." WHEN I ASKED OF WHAT POINT THIS JUDGEMENT WAS MADE ON THE SIX MEN, HE SAID "YOU SHOULD BE SATISFIED WITH WHAT I HAVE SINCE I COME AS A DIPLOMAT NOT A POLICE-MAN."

6. THEN HE SAID HE WISHED TO DISCUSS THE MEETING BETWEEN ASST. SECY HARTMAN (FOR WHOM HE HAD KIND WORKDS) AND YUGOSLAV

CHARGE PETKOVIC. HE REMARKED THAT HARTMAN "SOMEHOW COMPLAINED TO PETKOVIC TO THE EFFECT THAT YUGOSLAVIA DID NOT DISPLAY A CONSTANT STANCE WITH RESPECT TO CARLOS AND HAS BROUGHT INTO QUESTION OUR POSITION ON INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM. I MUST SAY THAT WE WERE VERY SURPRISED AT THIS QUESTION IN BRINGING CARLOS INTO THE QUESTION OF THE HIJACKING OF THE PLANE. IT SEEMS THAT YUGOSLAVIA, HAVING NO CONNECTION WITH EITHER GROUP, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR BOTH OF THEM." BERNARDIC CALLED THIS AN "INCORRECT STEP AND UNFOUNDED CONNECTION, THAT OF REFERRING TO CARLOS IN THIS CONTEXT." HE SAID "THIS CARLOS AFFAIR IS VERY DUBIOUS. WHAT WE CAN SEE FOR THE MOMENT IS THAT THE CARLOS AFFAIR AND THE HIJACKING COINCIDED AND THAT THEY ARE AGAINST THE INTERESTS OF YUGOSLAVIA AND ARE BEING EXPLOITED IN THE MASS MEDIA TO THAT EFFECT. THERE IS NO GREATER STUPIDITY OR NONSENSE THAN TO CHARGE YUGOSLAVIA WITH COLLUSION IN INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM OR TO ACCUSE YUGOSLAVIA OF NOT TAKING STANDS AGAINST TERRORISM."

7. HE NEXT SAID I WAS PROPHETIC. WHEN I RAISED MY EYEBROWS, HE SAID THAT MY "PROPHECY" TO STARCEVIC "THAT PROBABLY VERY SOON WE WILL HAVE DIFFICULTIES WITH CARLOS" HAS BEEN "FULFILLED." I TOLD HIM THAT HIS COMMENT BORDERED ON A VERY SERIOUS ACCUSATION AND ASKED HIM DIRECTLY WHETHER HE WAS SUGGESTING THAT MY STATEMENT TO STARCEVIC THAT CARLOS COULD BE A THREAT TO YUGOSLAVIA WAS A PREDICTION OF THE HIJACKING. HE

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O 171735Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8108

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BELGRADE 6142

(THREE TIMES) "I DIDN'T SAY THAT." HE THEN STARTED TO DREDGE UP THE OLD VAGUELY WORDED LITANY ON "PRESSURE" AND "A CAMPAIGN AGAINST YUGOSLAVIA."

8. I TOLD HIM THAT HARTMAN HAD PRESENTED THE USG POSITION TO THE GOY THROUGH ITS CHARGE AND THERE WAS NO NEED FOR ME TO REITERATE IT. I SUGGESTED THAT IF THERE WAS ANY CAMPAIGN, IT WAS DIRECTED BY THE GOY THROUGH ITS PRESS AND WITH OTHER DIPLOMATS, IMPLYING THE USG RESPONSIBLE FOR HIJACKING ITS OWN PLANE. SUCH A CHARGE IS NOT ONLY NONSENSE, I SAID, BUT BEYOND THAT IT IS TROUBLING, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF THE DEATH OF ONE AMERICAN AND THE INJURIES TO SEVERAL OTHERS.

9. WHEN HE ASKED ME ABOUT GOY ACCUSATIONS, I OFFERED TO PROVIDE HIM WITH ALL THE YUGOSLAV PRESS ARTICLES ON THE SUBJECT WHICH REFERRED TO "CIRCLES" IN THE USG AS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HIJACKING. HE SAID "CIRCLES IN THE US AND NOT CIRCLES IN THE USG." I ASKED HIM TO SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFY THOSE "CIRCLES." HE SAID YUGOSLAVIA NEEDED USG ASSISTANCE TO IDENTIFY THESE CIRCLES. WHEN I TRIED TO PIN HIM DOWN HE BRIEFLY REFERRED TO GARMENT AND MOYNIHAN/ AND THEN IN A MORE EXPANSIVE FASHION TO "PRESS ARTICLES WHICH CLEARLY SHOW THE ATTITUDE OF THE PRESS TOWARD THE HIJACKING." HE REPEATED THE LINE WE HAVE SEEN ALL WEEK, I.E., THAT
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THE HIJACKERS DID NOT ACT ON THEIR OWN AND THAT SOMEONE IS TRYING TO SABOTAGE US POLICY TOWARDS YUGOSLAVIA. HE SAID THE USG HAS NOT TAKEN NOTICE OF INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE GOY ON "FASCIST GROUPS" AND HAS "PLAYED DOWN OUR CONCERN. NOR DO WE HAVE PROOF THAT THE USG HAS TAKEN CONCRETE MEASURES." HE STATED THAT THE SAME GROUPS HAVE KILLED A US POLICEMAN; BUT THAT IT WAS NOT HIS WISH TO LECTURE THE USG "BECAUSE THE USG KNOWS QUITE WELL THESE GROUPS EXIST AND ARE BECOMING WORSE. THIS IS OUR CRITICISM AGAINST THE US AND WE CAN'T APPLY IT AGAINST ANYONE ELSE EXCEPT THE USG."

10. I THEN REMINDED HIM OF ALL THE MEASURES TAKEN AGAINST THE HIJACKERS AND THAT THERE WAS STRONG INTENTION TO PROCEED FIRMLY AGAINST THEM.

11. HE REMARKED THAT THE GOY WAS "QUITE JUSTLY SURPRISED WITH INNUMEROUS ASPECTS THAT TOOK PLACE DURING THE HIJACKING, BUT WE WERE PARTICULARLY SURPRISED AT THE FACT THAT THE US GOVERNMENT CONDUCTED A DIALOGUE OR NEGOTIATED WITH THE HIJACKERS. BUT IT HAS NEVER BEEN OUR INTENTION TO

DESCRIBE TO THE USG WHAT TO DO ANY MORE THAN WE ARE READY FOR A LECTURE. IT IS THE SOVEREIGN RIGHT OF EACH GOVERNMENT TO ACT AS IT WISHES. THE USG CAN DISCUSS, NEGOTIATE, OR FULFILL THEIR CONDITIONS. HOWEVER, THIS CANNOT LEAVE US CALM."

12. I THEN ASKED WHY IT HAD BEEN STARCEVIC WHO HAD RECEIVED ME LAST WEEK WHEN I HAD ASKED FOR HIM (BERNARDIC) OR MOJSOV ON A MATTER THAT I DESCRIBED TO BE OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO THE US. BERNARDIC SAID THAT MOJSOV TOLD HIM HE JUST THAT DAY RETURNED FROM VACATION AND "HAD A WHOLE PILE OF COMMITMENTS." I REMINDED BERNARDIC THAT HE HAD ALREADY DISCUSSED CARLOS WITH THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR AND THAT MOJSOV MUST HAVE BEEN FAMILIAR WITH IT, THEREFORE IT WAS TROUBLING THAT I WAS ASKED TO MEET WITH SOMEONE WHO ASSERTED NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE MATTER.

13. TOWARDS THE END OF OUR MEETING, BERNARDIC MADE A POINT OF MENTIONING A DINNER INVITATION I HAD SENT HIM FOR THE END OF THIS MONTH. HE SAID HE PREFERRED TO RESPOND TO ME DIRECTLY AND THAT IF WE HAD NOT MET TODAY, CONFIDENTIAL

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HE WOULD HAVE TELEPHONED ME PERSONALLY RATHER THAN GOING THROUGH PROTOCOL. THEN HE TOLD ME HE REGRETTED THAT HE WOULD BE UNABLE TO COME TO THE DINNER BECAUSE AT THAT TIME HE "WILL BE ENGAGED WITH A SOVIET DELEGATION." WHEN WE PARTED HE APOLOGIZED FOR THE DETERIORATION OF HIS ENGLISH. HE SHOOK HIS HEAD NEGATIVELY WHEN I ASKED HIM WHETHER HIS RUSSIAN WAS IMPROVING.

14. COMMENT: BY REFERRING TO THE PECULIAR WAY THEY HAD STARCEVIC MEET ME AND MY REITERATING THAT HARTMAN HAD PRESENTED USG'S POSITION, I EXPRESSED AS DELICATELY AS I COULD THAT HE WAS LYING THROUGH HIS TEETH. SILBERMAN

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